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Six High Schools Win the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Model Car Challenge

WASHINGTON, DC – Six high school teams won $9,000 at today's third annual Hydrogen Fuel Cell Model Car Challenge, part of the Department of Energy's National Science Bowl®.

Woodrow Wilson High School of Portland, Ore., took first place in the Grand Prix speed race; and the Harker School of San Jose, Calif., conquered a 20 degree incline with their hydrogen powered model car to become the "King of the Hill". The two first-place teams each receive $1,750 for their schools' science departments.

Taking second and third place in the speed race were Ward Melville High School of East Setauket, NY and Skyview High School of Vancouver, Wash., respectively. Lexington High School of Lexington, Mass., and State College Area High School of State College, Penn., won second place and third place, in the King of the Hill competition. The second and third place teams for each competition receive $1,500 and $1,250, respectively.

"The President's hydrogen fuel initiative is one of the most exciting and ambitious scientific endeavors underway," Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman said. "The program envisions cars and trucks that run on clean, abundant hydrogen, rather than gasoline. The students that built and raced model hydrogen fuel cell cars today may be among the future scientists and engineers helping make that vision a reality."

The model cars use a fuel cell to convert hydrogen and oxygen into water via a chemical reaction, which then generates electricity to power a motor that propels the car. Since no combustion was involved, the only byproducts are heat and water.

With model car kit components provided by General Motors, the teams designed and built the small hydrogen vehicles with technical assistance from engineers of the Department of Energy. Each model car measured a maximum of one foot wide and two feet long.

The Model Car Challenge is one of the hands-on activities in which the 63 National Science Bowl teams take part on Saturday Science Day. The 18 teams competing in the Model Car Challenge were selected by lottery from the pool of Science Bowl teams requesting to take part in the race.

On Sunday, May 1, these 18 student teams are joining 47 other teams from across the country competing in the round robin and double elimination matches of the 15th annual National Science Bowl. In "Jeopardy" like fashion, the teams are broken up into eight divisions and compete in seven round robin matches each to determine the top 16 teams participating in the double elimination category. Throughout the two-day competition the teams will answer increasingly difficult questions in biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, mathematics, and earth and general sciences.

This year, 13,000 students from 1,800 schools participated in regional Science Bowl contests to determine the 63 teams competing at the Nationals. The Department of Energy created the National Science Bowl in 1991 to encourage high school students to excel in math and science and to pursue careers in these fields. The department's Office of Science administers the National Science Bowl®.

Biographical information on the teams and more information on the Department of Energy's National Science Bowl® is available on the web at **www.scied.science.doe.gov/nsb**

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